

WANDERERS' LOTTERY HITCH

Anger erupts over kiosk plan

PEOPLE in Italy and Malta know more about Wycombe Wanderers than some of our district councillors, according to club chairman Reg Williams.

An angry Mr Williams was talking to Midweek after the club's latest failure to win council permission to sell lottery tickets from a kiosk in the Octagon.

"It's very much a case of us against them," said Mr Williams after plans for the kiosk received a further setback at a recent meeting of the council's environmental health committee.

Refused

The council's own lottery tickets are on sale from a kiosk outside the bus station cafe but Wycombe Wanderers have been refused permission for a kiosk — even though the club applied for one before the council lottery started.

Mr Williams said: "I am not the sort of person who would want a public slanging match with the council but I feel very annoyed about the whole thing."

"The council just doesn't seem to realise what an integral part of the town Wycombe Wanderers is. We have carried the name of the town to all parts of the globe and even if the council doesn't realise it, we have brought a lot of trade to the town."

Support

"We are pretty large ratepayers and we need all the help and support we can get to keep the club going. I cannot understand how councillors can treat us this way. They don't deserve a club like ours."

Wycombe Wanderers first applied for permission to sell lottery tickets from a kiosk in the Octagon early last year — several months before the council's own lottery started.

The environmental health committee refused the application on the grounds

that it would set a precedent and that other similar applications would have to be given the go-ahead.

Later, the council started its own lottery and as Mr Williams puts it: "Lo and behold — a kiosk appeared in the Octagon."

The club wrote to the committee pointing out its original policy.

"Naturally, we assumed we would be given permission for a kiosk because the council had set a precedent by installing its own kiosk," said Mr Williams.

But although the committee was split equally on the issue, the chairman's casting vote gave Wanderers the thumbs-down. It was decided to defer the matter for three months so that the committee could assess the situation.

Ceiling

Then on January 17, the plan received a further setback when the committee again refused to approve it. Permission may be obtained to site the kiosk in Frogmoor. But Frogmoor is

classed as an open space and is therefore the responsibility of another council committee — the recreation and amenities committee.

So what now? Mr Williams said he still hadn't "come down from the ceiling" but the matter would be considered at next month's club committee meeting.

And in a recent club programme, secretary John Goldsworthy wrote: "It seems that competition is not the name of the game. Maybe monopoly is."

Mrs Audrey Moore, chairman of the environmental health committee, told Midweek:

"Obviously we are not keen to have competition, but the club's original application to sell tickets from a kiosk situated in an unspecified area of the Octagon on two days in March was refused largely on highway grounds."

"Now that we have established our kiosk on what has proved a satisfactory site, there is no room for a second one."

THE Football Association have stepped in to settle a disagreement between Wycombe Wanderers and Blyth Spartans as to the date and timing of a replay of their F.A. Trophy second round tie.

Should the teams draw at Blyth on Saturday, then the replay would be at Loakes Park on the following Wednesday, starting at 2 p.m.

The kick-off time is at the insistence of Blyth, who are completely within the rules of the competition.

These state that if a replay is necessary it will take place on or before the following Thursday, kick-off 2 p.m. unless the home team has floodlights. In that case, the kick-off can be 7.30 p.m., providing both teams agree to play under lights.

Blyth did not agree with this and therefore, any replay would kick off at 2 p.m.

The Northern League side, who reached the last 16 of last year's F.A. Cup, are not objecting to the Wycombe lights. They are concerned that if it were an evening kick-off, their players would have to take two days off work.

But by insisting on an afternoon start they would lose only one day.

Not in rules

Wycombe secretary John Goldsworthy explained: "We tried to make the replay date the following Saturday but the F.A. would not agree as it was not in accordance with the competition rules."

Should the weather prevent the match taking place on Saturday, the re-arranged date would be Wednesday, February 7 at Blyth, kick-off 2 p.m.

If necessary the Blyth pitch will be inspected at tea-time on Friday to avoid unnecessary travel the following day. The decision will be available on Blues' Information line High Wycombe 446763, during Friday evening.

Blues most immediate concern is the state of the pitch for tonight's Berks and Bucks tie at home to Maidenhead United, postponed from last week.

Unevenness

A steady thaw set in yesterday but the main problems with the Loakes Park pitch is the unevenness caused by the churning up it received in the Isthmian League match against Kingstonian ten days ago.

Wycombe are hopeful that the match will be played and that will give local fans the chance to see two former Wanderers players turning out for the Magpies.

Maidenhead are managed by Geoff Anthony who still plays, while Derek Harris, who signed early in the season, will also be in action.

The Berkshire club are currently enjoying their most successful season for several years and are well placed just behind the leaders in the Isthmian Division One promotion race.

Tickets for the train journey up to Blyth (£6 each) will be on sale from 7.9 p.m. tonight and Thursday from the clubhouse, and on Wednesday from the bottom tea bar at Loakes Park.